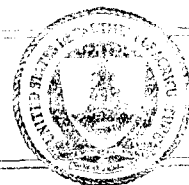




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NOT ALL FOREIGN GAME BIRDS  
SUITABLE FOR NATURALIZING

Biologist Explains Why Eurasian Birds  
Are Superior for Introduction  
Into the United States

Because Old-World stock as in the case of the horse, the cow, the pig, and most of the high-ranking cultivated fruits, has so often proved superior in hardiness and adaptability, it is natural for one to turn first to Europe and Asia when considering possible sources of game birds for acclimatization in the United States, says W. L. McAtee, senior biologist of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, in a circular on the naturalization of alien birds in the United States, just issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"The chamois of the Alps, the ibex of the Pyrenees, and the pheasants of densely populated China have maintained their existence in close contact with man for centuries, while similar representatives of American fauna, with uncounted millions of acres to range over, have faded away like mist before the morning sun," says Mr. McAtee. "Although the number of hunters and fire-arms in the Old World has never been very large, the few hunters have customarily taken larger bags, and snaring, trapping, and other methods of securing game have been practiced for ages. The Eurasian game birds and animals doubtless had time through the centuries to develop defenses against man's slowly improving armament and a tolerance for the changes in natural conditions resulting from increase in population. American species, on the other hand, adapted to conditions in a country sparsely populated and primitively armed, were suddenly called upon to face the destructive influences of an effectively armed and ever-growing population." That is the reason why Mr.

McAtee believes it is logical, when seeking game birds for transplanting to a country that is now well populated, to utilize species that have been tested and tempered by ages of close association with man.

The ring-necked pheasant and the Hungarian partridge are the two exotic game birds that have responded most successfully to naturalization in this country. The new circular contains maps showing the present ranges of these species in North America. There are other maps showing the world distribution of annual precipitation, natural vegetation of the world, areas of the United States physically suited to forest only, and native vegetation of the United States--factors which the author recommends should be carefully considered when a new game bird is to be tried out, for in the case of a desirable bird, if the rainfall, temperature, and vegetation of its native home can be fairly well matched, other conditions can be so altered and controlled in a given locality as to make them favorable to naturalization of it. Mr. McAtee has used these factors as a basis in pointing out what parts of the United States are best suited for planting various exotic birds. He states that "where native game birds are abundant there is little or no need to plant exotic species; but where native species do not supply the demand, foreign game birds can well be introduced."

Some of the game birds besides the Hungarian partridge and the ring-necked pheasant recommended in the new circular as suitable for naturalizing in the United States, are Reeves's, golden, Lady Amherst, brown eared, Elliot's, and cheer pheasants, all from China; the Japanese pheasant; the Indian peafowl; red-legged partridges from southern Europe and northern Africa; guinea fowls from west Africa; and bustards and sand grouse from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Species considered undesirable for introduction are the red grouse of the British Isles; the capercaillie from Europe; the Himalayan snow cock; the migratory European quail; and the European wood pigeon.

The new circular, Circular No. 96-C, entitled "Game Birds Suitable for Naturalizing in the United States," may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at 10 cents per copy.

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